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SUBJECT: PROFESSIONALIZING NICARAGUA'S FOREIGN SERVICE

¶1. (U) On June 29, TDY Foreign Affairs Officer represented the Embassy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' induction ceremony for the successful candidates of the second public competitive examination for entrance to the nation's diplomatic service. Of the ten candidates selected, nine were women. The event was attended by representatives of the international diplomatic community, as well as officers of the Foreign Relations and other ministries.

¶2. (U) Minister of Foreign Affairs Norman Caldera delivered the opening address, commenting that the open, merit-based competitive examination process signals a professionalization of the nation's diplomatic corps that will enable Nicaragua to more adequately face the demands of an increasingly competitive and globalized world. He noted that the testing process was rigorous -- including examinations in Nicaraguan and world history, international relations, international law, economics, world culture and English for foreign professional communication. Exam scoring was conducted anonymously and candidates underwent rigorous oral exams before members of a statutorily created commission. The test results were made public. The Minister thanked Ave Maria College for its cooperation in the exam preparation process.

¶3. (U) Caldera highlighted that the fact that nine female candidates were selected demonstrates the powerful presence of women as leaders in contemporary Nicaragua, adding that Nicaragua's ambassadors in Peru, Egypt, Belize and France are female. His remarks were followed by a speech by Vice Minister of Foreign Relations Javier Williams Slate (a member of the Miskito indigenous community), who presided over the induction of the individual candidates. The Vice Minister focused on the youth of the 10 selected candidates, referring to them as "distinguished and dedicated citizens" who represent the future of the nation's Foreign Service.

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